GREATER HAMILTON
THE REGIONAL CENTRE
DEVELOPMENT REPORT 88-2

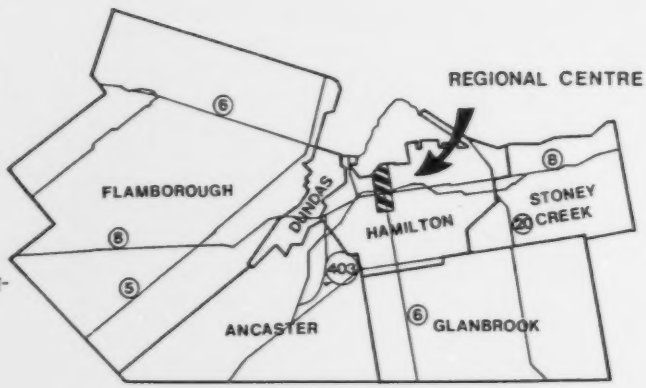
Hamilton-Wentworth Region • Planning and Development Department • Strategic Planning Division

Introduction

The Regional Centre of Hamilton-Wentworth provides vital commercial, institutional, cultural, recreational, social and health services and facilities to the residents of Hamilton-Wentworth and to a larger hinterland. Ongoing redevelopment projects and proposed improvements [illegible] to the continuing vibrance of the Centre.

The Regional Centre encompasses 1,250 acres and is bounded by the Niagara Escarpment (south), the Hamilton Harbour (north), Queen Street (west), and Victoria Avenue (east). The heart of the Regional Centre is the downtown core, with its many retail shops, public and private offices, and cultural, recreational, and institutional facilities. Residential uses predominate north and south of the core. A significant number of industrial uses are located north of the core.

REGIONAL CENTRE LOCATION IN HAMILTON-WENTWORTH



Highlights...

Commercial development in the Regional Centre includes approximately 3.5 million sq. ft. of retail floor space and 4 million sq. ft. of large office space.

Large office space increased by 5.6% between 1985 and 1987, and retail space will increase by 5.7% with the completion of the new Eaton's Centre in 1989.

The average net rental rate for prime office space is roughly one-half of rent for comparable space in downtown Toronto.

Institutional activities, such as government, health and non-profit services, employ more than 9,000 persons in the Regional Centre (including 6,000 persons employed at St. Joseph's and Hamilton General Hospitals).

Residential uses, including 173 apartment buildings, occupy 43% of land. Many of the 34,600 people living here are either over 65 (19%) or between the ages of 25 and 34 (22%).

Cultural, recreational and specialized services attract people from within a 60 kilometre radius. Public expenditures of $300 million for urban redevelopment between 1972 and 1987 have produced many prominent new service facilities and stimulated private investment in office, retail, and residential sectors.

A comprehensive transportation network services the Regional Centre with public transit (HSR and GO), a grid street system providing good access to Hwy 403, and 8,400 parking spaces.

Downtown Action Plan expenditures by the City of Hamilton of $10 million have introduced significant new pedestrian and streetscape improvements.

The proposed Perimeter Road and the planned expansion of GO train service at the TH&B station will improve transportation service and reduce through and truck traffic in commercial and residential districts.

ACTIVITY IN THE REGIONAL CENTRE

1. Commercial

Commercial activities occupy approximately 12% of the land, mainly in an East-West strip between Cannon and Hunter Streets in the downtown core. Additional commercial concentrations are located north and south of these boundaries on James Street.

1.1 Retail

There are approximately 3.5 million sq. ft. of retail space in the Centre, 17% of the Regional total.

Unique retail shopping districts, such as Jackson Square, Hess Village, the Downtown Promenade, International Village, King William Street, James Street South, and James Street North, contribute to the diversity and character of the Regional Centre.

The estimated value of retail sales in the Regional Centre in 1987 was $448 million.

The retail sector is continuing to expand. The most prominent new development is the $100 million Eaton's Centre on James Street North, expected to open in 1989. It will contain 510,000 sq. ft. of retail floor space, almost 200,000 sq. ft. more than the existing structure.

1.2 Office

There are 60 large office buildings, containing almost 4 million sq. ft. of floor space. This represents 84% of the large office space in the Region.

There was a 5.6% increase (224,000 sq. ft.) in large office space between 1985 and 1987, due to construction of new buildings for lease and expansion of existing buildings.

Several office projects, including the renovation of the historic Bank of Montreal building on James Street South and the construction of a Regional headquarters and Phase II of the CIBC development, are currently in the planning stages.

The vacancy rate in private competitive large offices was 17.6% in 1987, down from 28.2% in 1985. The most dramatic drop in vacancy rates was in buildings renting for $14.00/sq. ft. or more, where rates declined from 43.4% to 13.0%.

Average net rent for prime office space is $16.00/sq. ft., about half the average for comparable space in downtown Toronto.

Largest Private Offices
Regional Centre, 1987

	sq. ft.
Standard Life	409,500
Stelco Towers	337,500
Commerce Place 1	183,600
IBM/25 Main West	132,600
Bell Canada (Bay St. S.)	128,900
Century 21	104,000
Bell Canada (Jackson St. W.)	103,700
Terminal Towers	100,000

Recent And Planned Large Office Development

Completed in 1987

1. Commerce Place I (183,648 sq. ft.)
2. Sun Life Addition (15,000 sq. ft.)
3. CHAM Centre (14,000 sq. ft.)
4. 44 Hughson St. S. (Extensive Renovations)

Planned

1. Commerce Place II: 2nd Phase of CIBC Development
2. Bank of Montreal Development: Restoration of Building and Construction of 13-storey office tower
3. Regional Office Building: Mixed Use Development with a 15-storey office tower
4. Medical Office Building: Sited adjacent to Hamilton General Hospital

Note: Large offices are office buildings containing at least 10,000 sq. ft. of floor space

Recent And Planned Retail and Mixed Use Development

Completed in 1987

1. CHAM Centre (York at Bay)
2. Centre Point (Wilson Street)
3. Commercial Plaza (James North)
4. Commercial Plaza (King East)

Under Construction

1. Eaton's Centre
2. Plaza on Cannon East

Planned

1. Atrium Square (Catharine Street)
2. Zellers Redevelopment (James Street North)
3. Mixed Use Development (18 Main Street East)

2. Industrial

Industrial uses are located predominantly north of the downtown core. The 91 industrial properties cover 12% of the land (150 acres). The most common industrial establishments are food processing, metal fabricating, printing, and auto collision and repair.

3. Institutional

Institutional activities cover approximately 130 acres of land and employ approximately 10,000 persons.

3.1 Government

There are 11 large public office buildings, with total employment of almost 4,000 persons. The largest are the Ellen Fairclough Building (233,910 sq. ft.), the Federal Government Building (179,725 sq. ft.), Hamilton City Hall (101,545 sq. ft.), Hamilton Main Post Office (99,182 sq. ft.), and the Hamilton-Wentworth Police Department Headquarters (96,182 sq. ft.).

In 1987, the Ministry of the Attorney General established a regional headquarters in Century 21. Currently, the historic Hamilton Public Library building is being renovated for use as a Unified Family Court. Within 5 years, the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth plans to move to a new office tower on Bay Street. The 15-storey tower will be part of a mixed use development with residential condominiums, underground parking, a shopping mall, and an elevated pedestrian bridge to the Jackson Square complex.

3.2 Health

Two major hospitals, employing 6,000 persons, provide health services. St. Joseph's specializes in kidney transplants and dialysis, and Hamilton General in burns and neurosurgery. Both hospitals have recently undertaken extensive modernization programs. Further expansion of the health sector will occur when a planned medical office, adjacent to Hamilton General Hospital, is constructed.

3.3 Non-Profit

The Regional Centre contains one-third of Hamilton-Wentworth's more than 300 non-profit organizations. These organizations serve Regional residents, and often a larger hinterland.

4. Residential

Residential uses account for 43% of the land (540 acres). Forty-six percent of residential land is concentrated in the neighbourhoods of Durand and Corktown, located south of Main Street. Other residential land is north of the downtown in the neighbourhoods of Central, Beasley, North End East, and North End West. (see map, pg. 8)

Sixty-seven percent of the 18,900 dwelling units in the Regional Centre are in apartment buildings. Thirty percent of all apartment units in Hamilton-Wentworth are concentrated here.

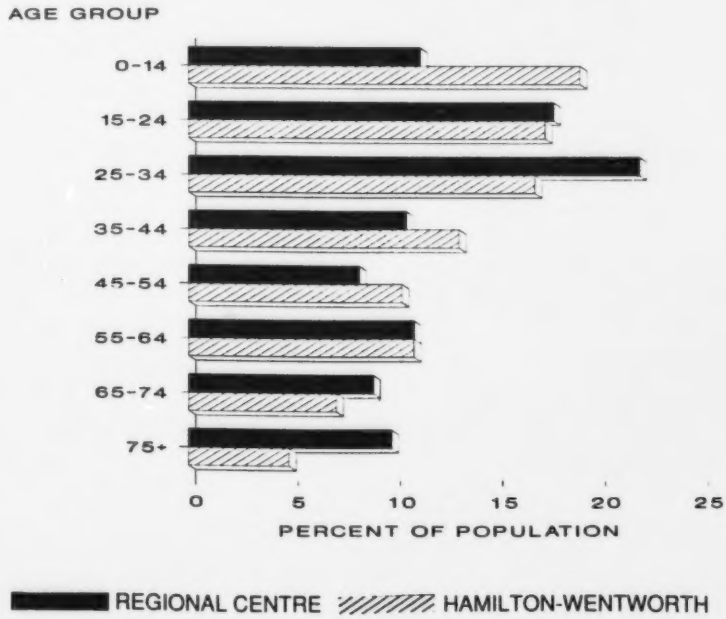
The number of dwelling units remained relatively constant between 1980 and 1985. The high costs of land and the economics of rental apartments have discouraged residential development. However, several new condominiums have been constructed in Durand Neighbourhood since 1985. Currently, the historic Pigott and Sun Life buildings are being renovated as a mixed use development containing 110 residential units.

5. Population

There are approximately 34,600 people living in the Regional Centre. A large percentage of the population is over 65 (19% compared to 12% in the Region) or between 25 and 34 years of age (22% compared to 17% in the Region). The elderly are attracted by the availability of rental accommodation, public transportation, and a variety of services; while 25 to 34 year olds are attracted to the lifestyle, employment, and rental housing opportunities. Families with young children form a smaller percentage of the population.

POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH AND REGIONAL CENTRE, 1985



Source: Ontario Ministry of Revenue, Assessment Division, and
The Hamilton-Wentworth Planning and Development Department

6. Services

The Regional Centre provides specialized cultural, recreational, and convention services to Hamilton-Wentworth and a larger hinterland.

6.1 Convention

A modern 13-room Convention Centre and 3 major hotels, with a combined capacity of 700 guests, are located in the Regional Centre. In 1987, these facilities accommodated more than 141 conventions and 76,800 delegates. In 1988, convention facilities are expected to accommodate approximately 200 conventions and 100,000 delegates.

6.2 Cultural/Recreational

Regional Centre cultural and recreational facilities include: Hamilton Place, a 2,000-seat theatre/auditorium complex; the Hamilton Art Gallery, containing the 4th largest permanent art collection of the more than 250 public galleries in Canada; and, Copps Coliseum, a 17,500-seat arena/trade centre suitable for hosting a wide range of events.

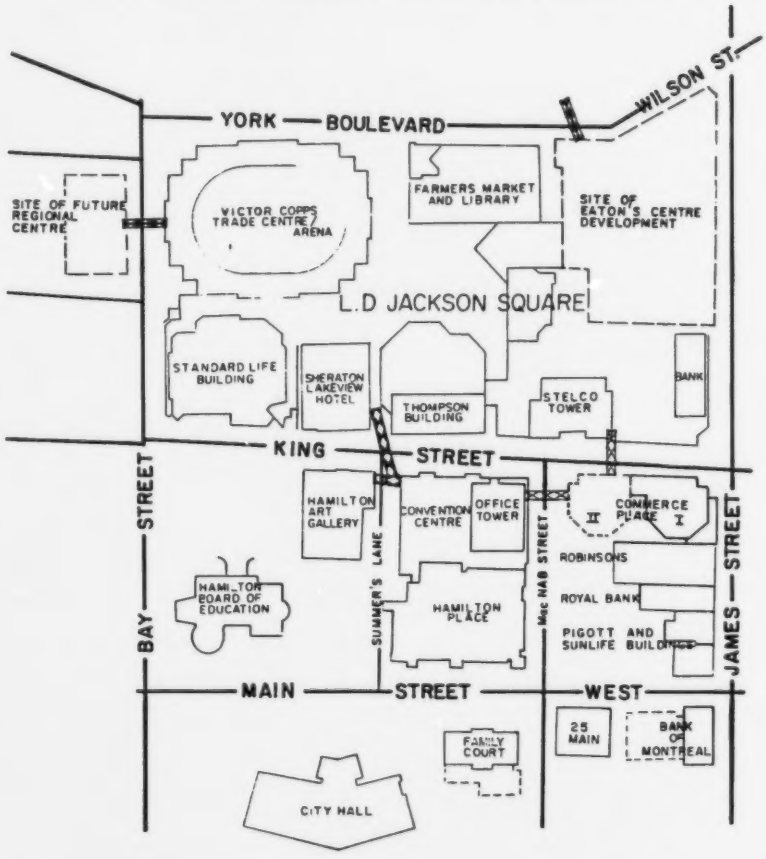
Cultural and recreational facilities serve a market extending into seven other Regions. For example, Copps Coliseum draws audiences from Hamilton-Wentworth, Metro Toronto, Peel, Wellington, Halton, Waterloo, Brant, and Niagara. In 1987, events at Copps Coliseum attracted a combined audience of 708,000 people, 17% more than in 1986.

Plans exist for additional cultural and recreational facilities. An $8 million theatre, with a seating capacity of 500 to 750 persons, is planned for King William Street to accommodate Hamilton's Theatre Aquarius Group. A Waterfront Park is planned for the West Harbour. This Park may include a craft and cultural centre, an Imax theatre, resaurants, a waterfront plaza, pedestrian networks, expanded marina facilities, and a children's area.

7. Historic Buildings

The character and attractiveness of the Regional Centre is, in part, conditioned by its many architecturally and historically significant buildings. The 42 buildings in the Regional Centre designated under the Ontario Heritage Act account for over one-third of the historically designated buildings in the Region. Many of these buildings are associated with historic preservation projects. Examples include: Park Place and the Bank of Montreal Building (retail/office); Central Public School, Unified Family Court, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church and Custom House (institutional); and, Sandyford Place, Pigott Building, Sun Life Building and Ballinahinch (residential).

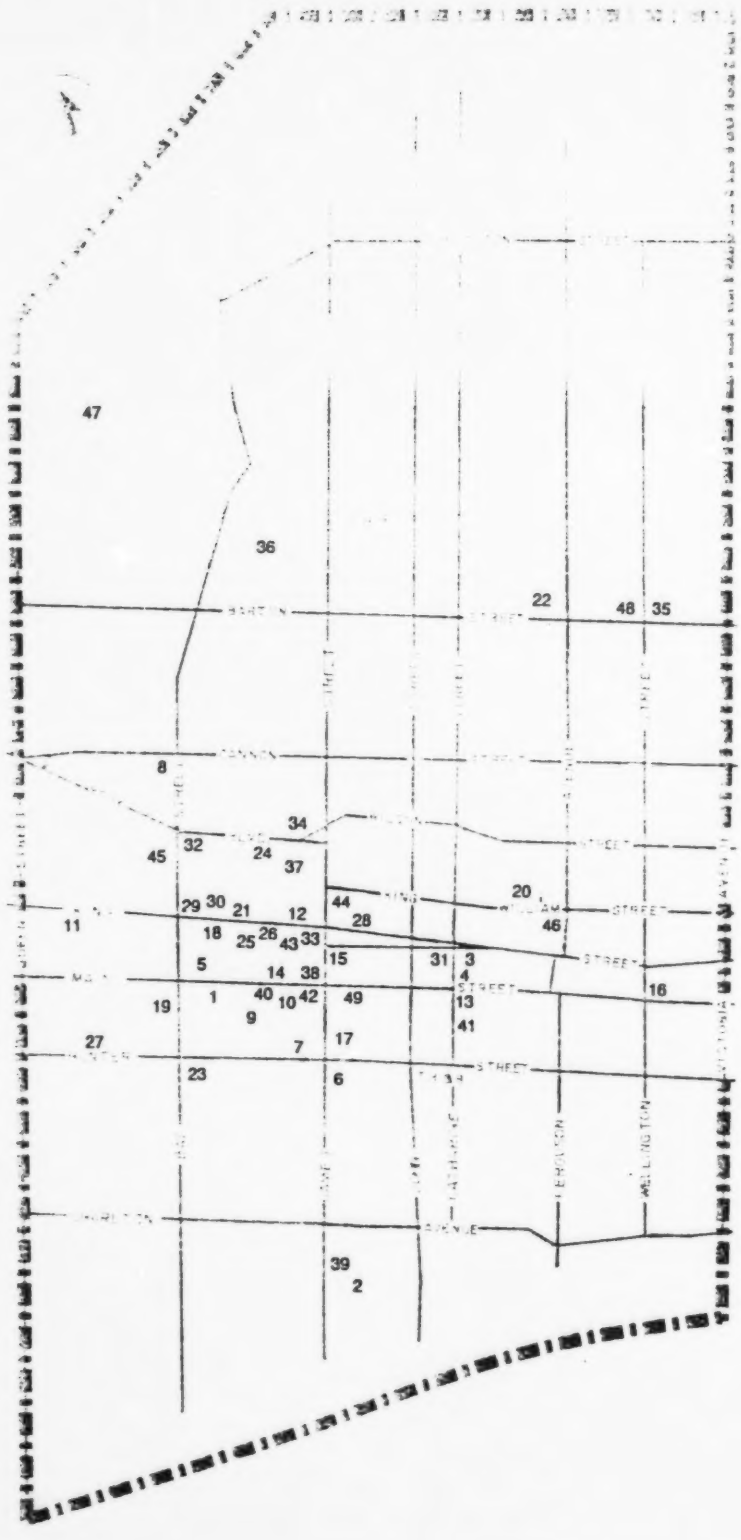
REDEVELOPMENT AREA



Urban redevelopment involved investment of more than $300 million between 1972 and 1987. Many specialized service facilities were completed during this time: the Hamilton Public Library, the Farmers' Market, the Hamilton Convention Centre, the Sheraton Hotel, and Copps Coliseum. Other components of urban redevelopment were: Stelco Tower, the Robert Thomson Building, the Ellen Fairclough Building, and the Standard Life Building.

Redevelopment is continuing with construction of the new Eaton's Centre and the renovation of the old library for use as a Unified Family Court. Future development will include: a Regional office development, the renovation and expansion at the Bank of Montreal building, and the construction of Commerce Place II.

Existing (▭), committed (▭), and proposed (▭) pedestrian bridges are part of an elevated walkway system which includes plazas above Jackson Square and the Hamilton Art Gallery.



MAJOR DEVELOPMENT (1960 - 1988)

PROJECT	YEAR
Completed	
1 Hamilton City Hall	1960
2 St. Joseph's Hospital	1962
3 Holiday Inn	1966
4 Terminal Towers	1966
5 Hamilton Board of Education	1967
6 Alexandra Square	1968
7 YWCA	1968
8 Sir John A. MacDonald S.S.	1970
9 Canadian Football Hall of Fame	1971
10 IBM/25 Main St. West	1971
11 Hess Village	1972
12 Jackson Square	1972
13 Ce ury 21	1973
14 Hamilton Place	1973
15 First City Trust	1974
16 First Place	1974
17 YMCA Phys. Ed. Building	1976
18 Art Gallery of Hamilton	1977
19 Bell Canada (Bay Street)	1977
20 Ham.-Went. Police Station	1977
21 Jackson Sq./Robert Thomson	1977
22 Regional Detention Centre	1978
23 Central Public School	1980
24 Farmers Market/Library	1980
25 Hamilton Convention Centre	1981
26 Ellen Fairclough Building	1982
27 CHCH TV	1984
28 Park Place	1984
29 Standard Life Building	1984
30 Sheraton Hotel	1985
31 Royal Connaught Hotel	1986
32 Copps Coliseum	1986
33 Commerce Place I	1987
34 York Boulevard Parkade	1987
35 General Hospital Expansion	1988
In Progress	
36 Custom House	1988
37 Eaton's Centre	1989
38 Heritage Gardens	1990
39 St.Joseph's Hospital Expansion	1988
40 Unified Family Court	1988
Proposed	
41 Atrium Square	
42 Bank of Montreal Development	
43 Commerce Place II	
44 Zellers Redevelopment	
45 Regional Office Development	
46 Theatre Aquarius	
47 Waterfront Park	
48 Medical Office	
49 Mixed Use Development	

8. Transportation

Access to and within the Centre is provided by a transportation system that includes pubiic transit services, vehicular and pedestrian networks, and parking areas.

8.1 Public Transit

The Regional Centre is serviced by the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR), GO Transit, Greyhound, and Canada Coach.

The HSR has 20 routes connecting to Stoney Creek, Dundas, and Hamilton. Average weekday ridership in and out of the downtown is about 72,000 passengers.

GO buses and trains connect to Toronto with frequent express buses (every 20 minutes during rush hour), buses connecting to trains in Oakville, Lakeshore West buses, and three GO trains daily. Daily GO ridership to and from the Regional Centre is about 4,200.

There are plans for GO train service to be moved to the TH&B station on Hunter Street from the CNR station on James Street North. A multi-modal station at the TH&B site would accommodate train service, GO and other intercity buses, HSR connections and a parking ramp. Timing for this expansion will be determined after completion of an environmental assessment of the proposal.

8.2 Pedestrian Improvements

Programs, such as the Downtown Action Plan, help create an attractive pedestrian environment. Many streets received new sidewalks, lighting, trees and benches through the $10 million program. The improvement area occupies over 100 acres north of Main and east of James Streets.

A pedestrian bridge between the Convention Centre and Sheraton Hotel is part of an elevated walkway system. Possible future bridges will link Jackson Square to the CIBC building, the York Boulevard Parkade, and the planned Regional office tower.

8.3 Streets

Roadways follow a North-South, East-West grid pattern. Most major streets are one way. There is good access from Hwy 403, with exits to Main Street East, Aberdeen Avenue, and York Boulevard.

Approximately 287,000 vehicles enter and leave the downtown on an average weekday. During a PM peak in 1987, 24,600 vehicles were counted entering and leaving the Regional Centre, 2% more than in 1980.

The construction of the proposed Perimeter Road will provide a direct controlled access connection between Burlington Street and Hwy 403. This should improve the urban environment of the Centre by reducing truck and through traffic in residential and commercial districts.

8.4 Parking

There are 48 publicly and privately owned parking lots available for public use. The number of spaces increased from 8,228 in 1984 to 8,439 in 1987. Ninety-six percent of the lots are concentrated within a 10-minute walk of King and James Streets.

The City of Hamilton owns 15 lots (3,248 spaces), including a new 814-space parkade on York Boulevard.

The use of parking facilities decreased between 1984 and 1987. The average accumulation of parked vehicles between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. was 6,265 (76% of capacity) in 1984 and 5,990 (71% of capacity) in 1987.

The planned Regional government office development on Bay Street will include 850 parking spaces. Also, the City of Hamilton's Five-Year Capital Budget contains plans to acquire at least 2 more properties for parking lots. Additional funds are available to develop facilities through joint ventures between the Parking Authority and private developers.

9. Planning Initiatives

The importance of the Regional Centre is reflected in planning initiatives designed to provide standards for future development.

The Central Area Plan is a document providing policy directions for the Regional Centre to the year 2001. It encourages balanced growth through guidelines for residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, recreational and cultural land use.

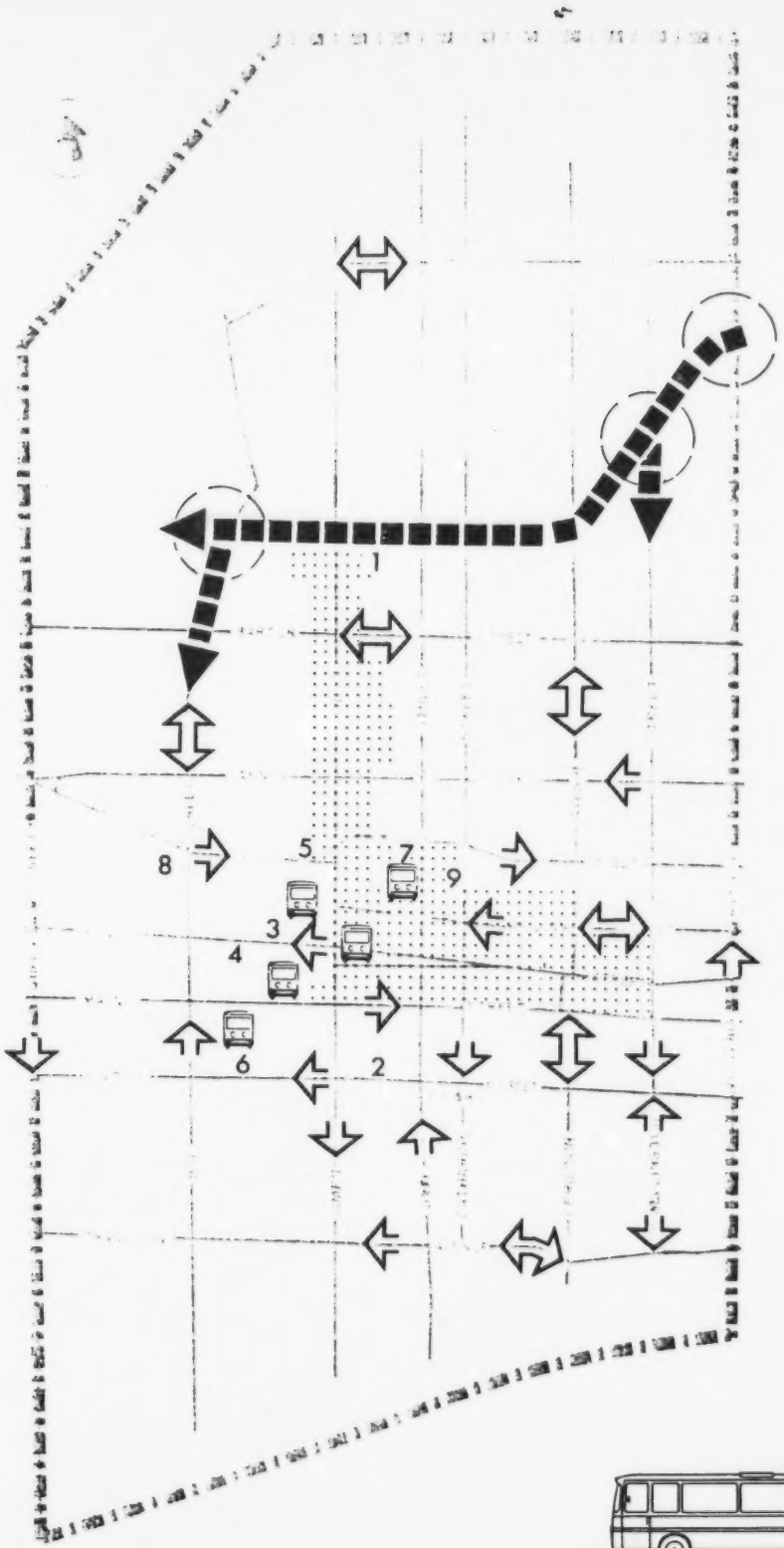
The Central Area Plan Implementation Committee (CAPIC) gives advice to the Planning and Development Committee of Hamilton City Council on actions regarding the implementation of the Central Area Plan. Its membership includes representatives of organizations with an interest in the Regional Centre, such as the Downtown Promenade Business Improvement Association and the Chamber of Commerce.

Local planning is conducted at the level of Planning Neighbourhoods. The Regional Centre contains six Neighbourhoods - Durand, Corktown, Central, Beasley, North End East, and North End West, as well as parts of Landsdale, Stinson, and Keith. Neighbourhood Plans provide guidelines for balanced attractive development at the local level.

Summary

New development, such as Copps Coliseum, Commerce Place and the new Eaton's Centre and the preservation of historic buildings, such as the Public Library and the Right House, reflect the future potential and the heritage of the Regional Centre. Proposed developments, such as the Regional government headquarters, new theatre facilities and a waterfront park, will build upon the strengths of the Centre while ensuring its continuing viability.

TRANSPORTATION



Train Stations

1 CNR
2 TH&B

Major Parking Lots

3 Jackson Sq. Underground (864 spaces)
4 King St. and Summers Lane (829 spaces)
5 York Boulevard Parkade (814 spaces)
6 City Hall (389 spaces)
7 Wilson Street (312 spaces)
8 Bay and Napier (300 spaces)

Hamilton Bus Terminal

9 Go Buses, Canada Coach, and Greyhound.

H.S.R. Major Loading Points

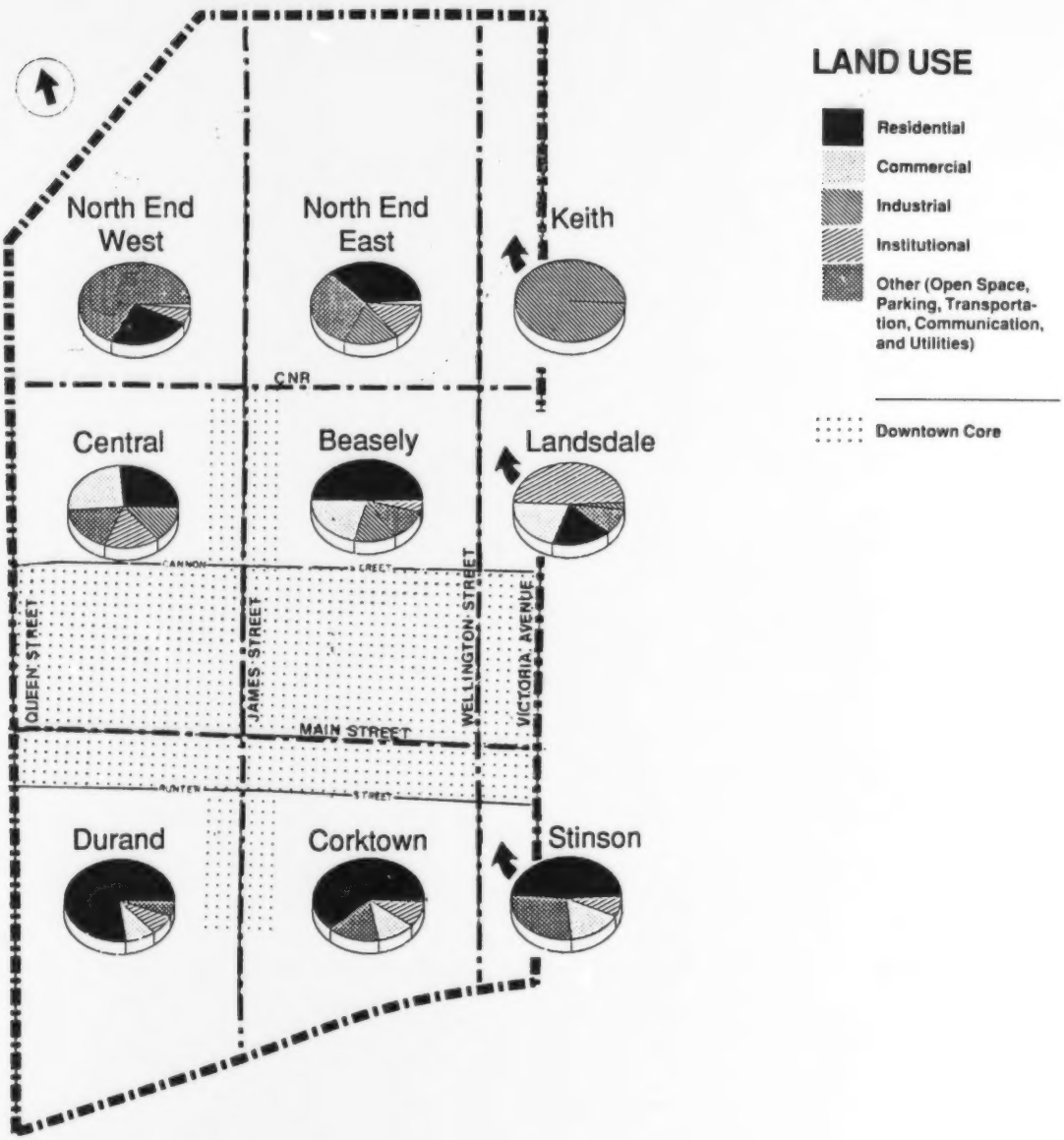
Proposed Perimeter Road

Proposed Interchanges

Direction of Traffic Flows

Downtown Action Plan

Shading designates area eligible for pedestrian and streetscape improvements under this program.



This is one in a series of information bulletins produced by the Regional Planning Branch of the Planning and Development Department, Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth.

Other Bulletins currently available:

- Greater Hamilton Population Trends (Report 87-1)
- Greater Hamilton Labour Force (Report 87-2)
- Greater Hamilton Construction Trends (Report 87-3)
- Greater Hamilton Industrial Development (Report 87-4)
- Greater Hamilton Large Office Inventory (Report 88-1)

For further information, please contact Julie Bergshoeff at 526-4348.